



News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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News Release No. 05-06

Date: Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2004

BLM Opens Petroleum Reserve to Tundra Travel

The Bureau of Land Management on Saturday opened the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska to tundra travel for this winter's permitted oil and gas activities.

The opening, which came one day earlier than in 2003, signaled BLM's determination that the tundra would not be damaged by the use of off-road vehicles or equipment used to construct temporary ice roads. Most oil and gas exploration on Alaska's North Slope is conducted during the winter, when the region's lakes and tundra are frozen and snow-covered, allowing easier access.

BLM's standards for opening the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska to overland traffic call for an average snow cover of 6 inches and a frost depth of 12 inches. Data from automated weather stations in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska indicated sufficient frost depth early last week. BLM personnel then spent several days on the ground testing snow depth and tundra hardness before announcing the opening.

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